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VACAVILLE

SACRAMENTO MUSICIAN AND INMATE STUDENTS PERFORM



PHOTOS BY JOEL ROSENBAUM — THE REPORTER

Sacramento Blues musician, Lew Fratis (second from left) and his band mates, Kenny Nichols on drums and Joe Lev on bass are joined by California-State Prison, Solano inmate Rodney Edinbyrd (far left) to entertain a group of inmates at the prison Friday during a performance of members of the musical development and performance program.

By Kimberly K. Fu
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Music swirled around the gym Friday at California State Prison, Solano, mentally transporting inmates far beyond prison walls into a personal space they described as transformative, peaceful and healing.

The talent was palpable and for professional Sacramento musician and CSP, Solano music teacher Lew Fratis, the experience was nothing short of amazing.

“Music is so important and what better place to do it than in a prison,” explained the Blues Hall of Fame inductee. “This has been a life-changing experience. ..., I was really amazed at the depth of talent.”

Friday’s performance has been a long time in coming, he said, for which his students have been waiting and practicing.

“This is up there with

everything I’ve ever experienced,” said the veteran performer. “It means so much to them. It touches me so much for them to get something from me, and (consider the class) a safe place.”

Fratis, a bluesman, teaches with the William James Association through Arts in Corrections, an initiative of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and California Arts Council.

For two years he’s taught SAP, Solano students musical theory with a focus on performing. Lessons include being part of a team, communicating, leadership and more.

For Rodney Edinbyrd, the class was fated.

A self-taught guitarist, bassist and drummer, he inherited a friend’s acoustic guitar. Intent on selling it, he picked it up on a whim. Turns out, he was a natural.

“I’ve been blessed,” he

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California State Prison, Solano inmate, Jack Loney sings along with the Marvin Gaye song “What’s Going On,” performed by his fellow inmates and blues artist, Lew Fratis and his band Friday at the prison.

EDUCATION

Vacaville school district leaders air thoughts, feelings about Florida school shooting

Supe Shamieh, trustee Kitzes acknowledge concerns, as trustee Windham offers safety assurances

By Richard Bammer
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Human trafficking prevention, the possible funding of teacher effectiveness programs at two charter schools, and a report about Cooper Elementary were on the agenda when Vacaville Unified leaders met Thursday night in Vacaville.

But what was on many people’s minds, including the trustees, district staff and the general pub-

lic during the governing board meeting were the Feb. 14 murders of 17 students and staff members by a deeply troubled former student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High in Parkland, Fla., the nearly 20th U.S. school shooting since Jan. 1.

In her routine remarks

at the meeting’s outset, Superintendent Jane Shamieh said “student safety and security” are “foremost” in the minds of district educators at all times.

“If you see something, say something,” she said, a reference to what she called a long-established “mantra” used by the U.S. Depart-

ment of Homeland Security.

At one point, Shamieh alluded to the consent calendar (items approved in one board vote), noting that the district’s school safety plans for all district campuses would be approved later in the meeting.

She pointed out that the district would conduct in the coming days and weeks emergency operations center training (Feb. 27); a parent informational meeting (also Feb. 27); and a

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Shamieh



Kitzes

TREMBLOR

Magnitude-7.2 earthquake slams Mexico

An earthquake has shaken south and central Mexico, causing people to flee buildings and office towers. **PAGE A6**




WINTER

Volunteers needed for urban habitat project

Help restore the Putah Creek Nature Park. **PAGE A3**

BUSINESS

 **Dow Jones**
 25,219.38 (+19.01)

 **S&P 500**
 2732.22 (+1.02)

 **Nasdaq**
 7239.47 (-16.97)

GOOD MORNING!

Have a great day, Tommy Smith.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Check out what’s going on in your neighborhood and the community. **INSIDE**